

ACT 14

S.B. NO. 1107

A Bill for an Act Making an Emergency Appropriation for General Assistance.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for immediate passage in accordance with section 9 of article VII of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

SECTION 2. Act 122, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, appropriated a certain designated sum to the department of human services to provide funds for the general assistance program under the benefit, employment and support services division for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015.

A critical funding emergency exists. Pursuant to section 346-53(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes, the general assistance program is a block grant program. The maximum allowance a general assistance recipient may receive is determined by dividing the amount of the appropriation by the number of general assistance recipients. The general assistance program will expend all appropriated funds before the end of the current fiscal year and the department will be unable to maintain the current maximum \$348 per month general assistance payment benefit to approximately 5,752 (the average General Assistance caseload for July - November 2014) disabled recipients. The current assistance grant for disabled individuals is based on 37.1 per cent of the 2006 federal poverty level. This amount is barely enough to cover living expenses for individuals on a fixed income who have no other viable means of support. Stopping the grant payment or reducing the amount of the grant payment for these individuals poses a real threat to the individuals' health and safety. To prevent the reduction of general assistance payments in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2014-2015, additional funds are urgently needed.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,514,822 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to be used for general assistance payments.

SECTION 4. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
(Approved April 22, 2015.)